



INFANTEER 2009

INFANTEERS THE LEADERS OF THE DECADE OF PEACEKEEPING

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SANDF participation in peacekeeping missions started in September 1999 with the deployment of an Infanteer, Col Hans Swart, who was the Officer Commanding of Group 15, and deployed as a Capital Liaison Officer in Kampala in support of the peace process in the Democratic Republic in the Congo (DRC).

OP FIBRE AND OP CURRICULUM - BURUNDI

The first infantry battalion to deploy externally was three companies of 1 Para Bn and one company of 6 SAI Bn in Burundi as part of Op FIBRE under the command of Lt Col Eddie Fullard from September 1999 to February 2000. The mission was established to protect the returning political leaders and to train an all-Burundian protection force. The name of the operation changed in January 2007 to Op CURRICULUM, an African Union Special Task Team. Since 2000 one Infantry has battalion deployed every six months to Burundi with a company of 10 SAI Bn under the command of Maj Mokgotho who will complete the deployment in October 2009.

OP MISTRAL – DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

In July 2002, the SANDF deployed a task force to Beni in the DRC as part of MONUC (French acronym for the UN Mission in the DRC). 2 SAI Bn, commanded by Lt Col Koos van Breda deployed under the command of 43 SA Brigade as part of this task force. Since then a battalion has deployed every six months with 5 SAI Bn under the command of Lt Col Chris Els, who is currently deployed.

OP CORDITE – SUDAN

Op CORDITE was launched in July 2004 with the deployment of staff officers and military observers to Darfur in Sudan. In January 2004, an Infantry Protection Company from mainly 10 SAI Bn deployed to Darfur under the command of Lt Col Engelbrecht. This deployment increased to a battalion in February 2005 when 6 SAI Bn deployed under the command of Lt Col Dries du Preez. 4 SAI Bn, under the command of Lt Col Patrick Gosani, is currently deployed in the Sudan.

OP TRITON – COMOROS

In March 2006, the AU requested the SANDF to oversee the African Union Mission in the Comoros. For 10 days in June 2006, 9 SAI Bn under the command of Lt Col Clinton Sandmann was deployed during the elections. At some stage they were strengthened by a company of 8 SAI Bn for a short period of time.

MISSION THEBE

Mission THEBE is an SA Army peace-building mission to the DRC that is responsible for the training of three Infantry battalions. The first Infantry battalion trained by Col Piet

Sereko and MWO Mike Mushayi at Mura Base near Likasi, was handed over to the DRC in September 2008. The next Infantry training team will deploy as soon as authority has been granted.

GENERAL

Individual Infanteers deployed to various other countries as part of the SANDF's external deployments while others made history by being appointed in UN or AU posts, such as Brig Gen Stephen Kobe, who became the Director Area Defence; he commanded the first South African Protection and Support Detachment in Burundi, Lt Gen Derrick Mgwebi, the first GOC of the SA Army Inf Fmn, who was the first ONUB (United Nations Operation in Burundi) Force Commander and Maj Gen Duma Mdutyana, the former Director Area Defence, who was appointed as Deputy Divisional Commander of MONUC and later became the Advisor to the DRC Defence Force.

During this decade of peacekeeping missions, the SANDF lost 124 members in enemy actions, military vehicle accidents, illnesses etc, but without their dedication and commitment, peace would not have been possible. We honour and remember your support to bringing peace to Africa.

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